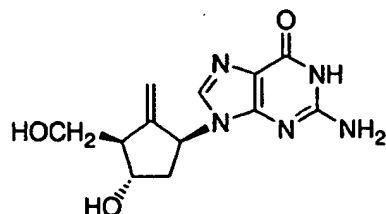


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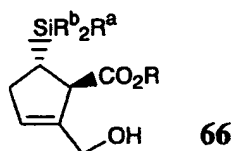
In the Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A process for the preparation of entecavir having the formula



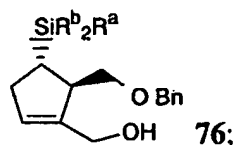
21, comprising:

- (a) treating an ester of the formula

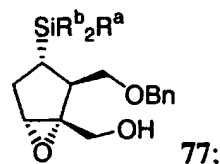


wherein R^a is allyl, phenyl, C_1 to C_6 alkylphenyl, or C_1 to C_6 alkoxyphenyl; R^b is C_1 to C_6 alkyl; and R is C_1 to C_4 alkyl or benzyl;

with an enol ether of acetone and an acid to protect the hydroxy group, followed by treatment with a hydride reagent to reduce the carboxylic acid ester moiety, and then alkylating the resulting alcohol with a benzyl halide and removing the enol ether hydroxy protecting group to give an allylic alcohol of the formula



- (b) epoxidizing the product from step (a) with a diastereoselective epoxidation to give a cyclopentane epoxide having the formula



- (c) treating the cyclopentane epoxide from step (b) with an alkali metal salt of a purine compound of formula